

WHEATLEY NEWS

Published by Wheatley Parish Council



Winter Sunshine in Littleworth Nature Reserve | Geoff Stephens

Become a Flood Warden - Page 5

20 Years of Swaps - Page 42

Howe Hampers Team - Page 54



Contributions

The Wheatley Newsletter welcomes contributions and adverts from everyone in the two parishes and from businesses and organisations serving Wheatley and District. News and reports from village organisations are particularly welcome but contentious issues or articles promoting personal causes should be avoided. Submissions should be made by **12th March** for the next issue.

The Editor reserves the right not to print items and to edit items submitted for publication.

Head to bit.ly/wnl-info for further details and to download a booking form.

Meetings & Dates

Full Parish Council

Merry Bells, 19:30

2nd February

2nd March

Planning Cmte.

Parish Office, 19:30

11th February

11th March

Finance Cmte.

Parish Office, 19:30

16th February

Open Spaces Cmte.

Parish Office, 19:30

16th March

Parish Surgery

Parish Office

09:30 - 11:30

Every Wed & Sat

District Cllr Surgery

Parish Office 10:30

**Not currently
running**

WHEATLEY NEWS

Publisher & Billing Enquiries

Wheatley Parish Council

The Parish Office

The Merry Bells

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Distributor

This newsletter is kindly distributed to all addresses in Wheatley and Holton by a team of volunteers, organised by the Parish Office.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of the Parish Council or the Editor, and no liability can be accepted for any errors or omissions, although we will publish corrections where necessary.

Happy New Year to you all.

I have two positive pieces of news to share in this column.

Firstly, last August the window was opened for applications to South Oxfordshire District Councils Capital Grant Fund to support projects within the community. WPC applied for a sum of money to refurbish Church Road Recreation Ground. The last 'refurb' was in 2007, and play equipment only lasts 20 years, so an upgrade was due. In November I sat in front of a Grants Panel and answered questions and explained our project. On Christmas Eve I received an email with an offer letter – giving us our full request of £50K. With the money we have set aside in our reserves, we can bring this project to fruition during 2026.

Secondly, just before Christmas I was lucky enough to see footage of the High Street culvert. You may remember that OCC put a camera down the culvert to check its condition. The culvert is an extraordinary piece of Victorian engineering in good condition, and the water is flowing freely. There are a lot of pipes coming together in Crown Square, but our culvert is standing up to the task. This fits in with meetings Cllr Ramsdale and I had with the district drainage engineers and the preliminary plans for Attenuation Ponds on Littleworth field and flood engineering work on Shotover Estate to hold water back from coming down the High Street.

Wheatley Parish Council have not yet signed the lease for Littleworth Field, but we are very close and as soon as we do, we will use the finalised plans of the ponds, plus the spoil from the earthworks to design a community park that will be a joy to visit. Part of our long-term strategy is to provide a more physically challenging activity area for older children, areas of biodiversity (to utilise the boggy area), walks, open play, and picnic areas. We also hope to use the slope of the land to create an amphitheatre for open air performances.

We admit these are ambitious long-term plans, which will take time to deliver, but if you aim for the moon, you might hit the tops of the trees, which will be a start. It is also important to see that Littleworth Field and Church Road Recreation Ground are interrelated, and together they will form lovely open areas for our community.

Finally, the MOD has formally given notice on the old Cadet Hut (at last), and some councillors and I are meeting the County Surveyor in January to agree Heads of Terms for a lease on the building. Our parish office duties are expanding, and we need more room to deliver services for our village. I will keep you updated as we progress.

Alison Sercombe

alisonsercombe@wheatleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Happy New Year and welcome to 2026!

I hope you all enjoyed a restful and enjoyable festive break. Council business is now back underway, with our regular meetings resuming. As a gentle reminder, all committee meetings are held in public, and you are always very welcome to attend and listen to the discussions. Time is also set aside for public participation, giving residents the opportunity to raise issues or ask questions of the Council.

Council Budget and Precept 2026–2027

At our November and December meetings, the Council carefully considered its budget and precept request for 2026–2027. The precept is a small percentage of residents' Council Tax that is allocated to the Parish Council. I am pleased to confirm that there will be no change to the precept amount. The Parish Council felt strongly that, during these challenging times, it is important to continue supporting our village while remaining mindful of household costs.

Making a Difference – Becoming a Parish Councillor

If you feel that 2026 is the year you would like to become more involved in village life, becoming a parish councillor can be a very rewarding experience. It offers the opportunity to make a positive difference in your community, develop new skills, and help ensure the Parish Council continues to meet its statutory responsibilities.

Wheatley Parish Council has helped shape the village over many years, and there are some exciting projects planned for 2026–2027 where new councillors could play an active role.

Further information is available on our website. Alternatively, if you would like to hear first-hand what the role involves, please speak to one of our current councillors or contact the parish office.

Progress on Projects

I am delighted to share that, thanks to the hard work of our Parish Chair, Alison Sercombe, Wheatley Parish Council has been awarded a £50,000 grant towards the Church Road Recreation Ground refurbishment. We are wasting no time in beginning the process of updating this much-loved park, which brings so much enjoyment to families and children across the village. We will continue to keep you updated as the project progresses.

Further discussions and meetings are also underway to secure the lease for the Cadet Hut on Littleworth Road.

Upcoming Events – Dates for the Diary

Play & Activity Day 2026 returns on Saturday 4 July.

This is a fantastic free day for the whole family, featuring a range of activities and entertainment, and a great opportunity for local organisations to get involved. If you would like to take part, please contact the parish office for further details.

Wheatley Artisan Market

Provisional dates are currently being discussed for April and September 2026 for our next Artisan Markets. Further details will be shared once dates are confirmed.

Sophie Coda | Clerk | clerk@wheatleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Call for Voluntary Flood Wardens

During the extreme rain of September 2024, residents of some areas of Wheatley were victims of a fierce flow of water that had a terrible impact on homes, business premises, and villagers. As part of the Action Plan following a Section 19 Report, various initiatives have been suggested, and one of them is having Flood Wardens strategically placed around the trigger points in the village. These are:

- The course of the Wheatley Brook from West Field, down Westfield Lane, Kiln Lane, and then the culvert under the High Street to Crown Square. And Crown Square itself.
- Littleworth Road from its junction with Old Road down to the New Club.
- The lower section of Farm Close Road behind the High Street shops and below Farm Close Lane to Crown Square.
- Old London Road, particularly at the end close to the Eastern junction with London Road.
- The areas of Kelly's Road and Keydale Road adjacent to the stream that runs through Littleworth.

More information about responsibilities can be found below. Please contact the parish office in the first instance if you are interested in being a Flood Warden.

www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Flood-Warden-Handbook-Summary-Document-v2.pdf

www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/Oxfordshire-County-Council-The-Flood-Warden-Handbook-V2.pdf

Traffic Working Group Report

Parking In Wheatley

As always, parking in our village continues to create issues and I'd ask everyone to be thoughtful about where they park, especially along our busiest roads, on corners and in residential cul-de-sacs, where emergency and service vehicles may need to get access. In recent weeks we have had a number of situations that demonstrates the problem.

Templars Close

A resident had a serious medical emergency, and an ambulance had to be called. However, due to cars parked on both sides of the road, the ambulance couldn't reach the resident's house. On another occasion the recycling lorry couldn't get into the close and it took three visits before the bins were emptied.

Fairfax Gate

Cars are parking at the entrance to Fairfax Gate and obscuring the view of vehicles trying to pull out onto London Road, making it dangerous to get out onto this busy road.



Remember, you should park at least 10 metres (32 feet) from a junction or corner, as per the UK Highway Code (Rule 243), to avoid obstructing traffic and pedestrians.

Littleworth, Corner Opposite the Row of Cottages

A white line has been painted on the corner to discourage vehicles from parking there. However, this is still happening and has, on occasions, caused disruption with large vehicles trying to get past and also delaying the 46 bus.

Blocked Drains

The conduit under the High Street has been inspected and the good news is that it seems to be in good condition. I have compiled a list of roads in Wheatley where drains are blocked, which I have provided to Oxfordshire County Council.

The blocked drains that are likely to contribute most to flooding are being addressed as a priority by the same team who are dealing with the culvert. These include those on Holloway, Church Road, and Friday Lane.

Tim Bearder (Oxfordshire County Councillor) and I are liaising with Oxfordshire County Council to agree a programme of maintenance for the rest of the drains.

Merry Bells Parking – Good News!

There are parking restrictions in force in the Merry Bells Car Park that means that residents can only park there for 2 hours, during the day, if they aren't visiting the Merry Bells. The good news is that the committee have decided to extend this to 3 hours, making parking there more convenient. **I don't have a date for the change yet so please check the signs when you park.**

Peter Ramsdale | Chair | WPC Traffic Working Group

WHEATLEY CHRISTMAS FAIR 2025

The 2025 Wheatley Christmas Fair was another success. The Christmas Tractor proved to be a wonderful new feature. With all the events they attended over the festive period, they raised a fantastic £5,718.95 for Katharine House Hospice, which is absolutely amazing!



The events ethos continued, with supporting Local Independent Businesses selling their handmade items. If you have such a business then please do get in contact for information about this event and also our Artisan Markets too.

We'd like to thank:

- Howe Trust (Wheatley) for a grant towards the event
- Wheatley Estates & BRUIN for power
- That Event Company for lighting and power solutions
- Gorman Civil Engineering & Groundworks and Cornfield Bakery for traffic management solutions
- Wheatley Park School Soul Band, Wheatley Adult's & Children's Choirs, City of Oxford Silver Band, and Razzamataz, for their festive entertainment

Save the date for 2026, Friday 27th November 2026 2pm-8pm



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Wheatley Gardening Club

In February there are signs of the approaching spring with bulbs appearing and wildlife waking up as daylight and temperatures increase. There is plenty to do indoors this month to prepare for the seasons ahead. Outdoors as the garden comes to life again its time to prune certain shrubs and climbers such as Wisteria. Spring usually starts to arrive across the country in March, and the longer days provide the opportunity for an increasing range of gardening tasks. It's time to get busy preparing seed beds and sowing seeds and it's your last chance to prune Roses.



Bergenia (Elephant's Ears). Flowers March-April

Bergenia Elephant's Ears) flowers March-April

The March meeting on **Tuesday 10th** is a talk by Katherine Woods @Teabreak Gardener on Growing Alpines which includes information on alpine plants, how to build a rockery and other options for growing Alpines in any garden.

The April meeting **Tuesday 14th** is a plant and seed swap evening.

Non-members are welcome at meetings the entrance fee is £2.00. Meetings held at the Merry Bells commencing at 7.30pm.

Queries and information: wheatleygardeningclub@gmail.com

Adrian Shepherd | Secretary



Soha Housing's Neighbourhoods team will be at The Merry Bells every second Monday of the month from 11am till 1pm. Do drop in to discuss anything that's on your mind, including rents, repairs and – also for the wider community – estates or neighbourhoods issues, or contact the team at any time on neighbourhoodteam@soha.co.uk or by calling 0800 014 15 45 (Freephone).

Liz Roberts

Dear Residents of Wheatley,

As we begin the New Year, I wanted to share a short update on some of the work I have been doing in and for Wheatley, and to thank everyone who has been in touch with me over recent months.

I continue to hold Thames Water to account on matters affecting the village, pressing for clearer communication and lasting solutions for residents.

I have been working closely with Oxfordshire County Council and Cllr Tim Bearder to review the impact of double yellow lines in the village and to ensure residents' views are properly considered.

More recently, I am pleased that drain clearance works have been taking place, which should help reduce flooding risks and improve resilience during periods of heavy rain.

I have also been engaging with SSE regarding recent power cuts affecting the area and raised these concerns in Parliament, speaking about the impact of power outages on communities like Wheatley and the need for better reliability and clearer communication.

My constituency survey is now being delivered locally and should be coming through your doors. I would be extremely grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete it. Your feedback will directly inform my work and priorities over the next year, and I want to hear what matters most to you.

Thank you for everything you do to make Wheatley such a strong and active community. As always, if there is something you would like me to raise or pursue on your behalf, please do get in touch freddie.vanmierlo.mp@parliament.uk.

Freddie van Mierlo MP

POP UP Christmas at the Larder

Thank you to everyone who helped with Christmas at the Larder in December.

There were so many stalls ranging from Christmas decorations, paintings, jewellery, toys, jigsaws, tombola, raffles and more, together with the usual Larder food and our regular cafe. More than £600 was collected to help with the £2,000 monthly winter heating bill at St Mary's.

As usual, the Larder is open every Thursday from 2.30 pm at St Mary's Church, together with Meg's café and £1.00 table. Everyone and anyone is welcome, and there is no charge.

Help us all to tackle food waste together!

Jane Fanning



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Wheatley Primary School and Acorns Nursery

Happy New Year from everyone at Wheatley Primary School! It has been a pleasure welcoming the children back after a well-deserved break following a busy Autumn term. They have quickly settled into an exciting new programme of learning, including topics such as the history of toys, the Vikings, and an environmental project titled Pass on Plastics.

We finished the Autumn term on a high with a week full of festive celebrations. Our annual pantomime trip was thoroughly enjoyed by both pupils and staff, with some particularly exciting and memorable special effects. We were also incredibly proud to share the children's musical talents with parents and the wider community through our Christmas performances. The school choir performed at the Wheatley Christmas Fair at the end of November and at a Christmas concert in St Mary's

Church, and we marked the season with a Christingle Service there as well.

Our dedicated PTA played a significant part in the festivities, supporting our involvement in the Wheatley Christmas Fayre with the ever-popular jar tombo-la and running a Christmas Swap Shop. Thank you to everyone who helped make these events such a success.

Looking ahead, the Spring term promises to be just as exciting. We are delighted to be extending our Forest School provision across the whole school, giving all children the opportunity to enjoy a wider range of outdoor activities and build skills progressively.

If you are looking for a place in school or Nursery we would love to welcome you and show you round. For further information or to arrange a visit, please contact the school office at office.3165@wheatley.oxon.sch.uk.

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Wheatley Windmill Preservation Society

2026 will be the 50th year since the launch of the idea to save our windmill. In order to mark the occasion, the society is holding a competition for pupils in Wheatley Park School, Wheatley Primary School, and the John Watson School to submit either a photograph or an artwork showing the windmill or an aspect of it.

Here are the competition rules:

1. In order to enter, you must be a pupil at one of the schools.
2. From each school, we will accept entries from older or younger pupils. The dividing age groups will be 4-7 or 8-11 in the primary school and 11-14 or 15-18 in the senior school.
3. You may only enter one artwork or photograph, which must be all your own work.
4. We will offer a first or second prize in each class and category.
5. The closing date for competition entries will be 30th April 2026.
6. Entries should be sent or delivered to Secretary, WWPS, 34, Westfield Road, Wheatley, OX33 1NG, with the name, school, and age of the artist or photographer and their contact details on the back to preserve confidentiality.
7. The first and second entries in each age group will be shown at an exhibition to take place in St Mary's church, from 1st to 14th June 2026.
8. The prizes will be awarded at the open afternoon at the windmill on 14th June 2026.

A note on access: the mill and paddock are privately owned and are normally closed to the public. During April 2026, we will arrange to have a steward on site on Saturdays 4th and 18th April from 10 a.m. until 12.30, so that competitors can come to gain inspiration on site. Competitors below the age of 14 should bring an adult with them. There are already a number of photographs on social media, which aspiring artists can use for practice.

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Wheatley Library

We hope you have had a good start to 2026! We have lots of exciting events planned for this year and we hope to see lots of you visiting the library.

** We are hoping to start a Lego Club at Wheatley library. We would be grateful for any donations of Lego in good condition that you no longer use. Thank you**

Special Events

Valentines Day Storytime and Craft: Saturday 14th February 10am

Chinese New Year Storytime and Craft: Saturday 21st February 10am

Regular Library Events

Rhymetime: Every Friday 10.30 to 11am. Recommended for children aged 5 and under

Storytime: Every Saturday 10 to 10.30am. Recommended for children aged 3 to 7

Digital Helper Sessions (one-to-one support with technology e.g. smart phones, emails, WhatsApp): Every Thursday 2.30 to 3.30pm. Email the library to book a slot.

Jigsaw Swap: 1st Saturday of the Month 9.30 to 12noon

If you are new to the village, the library is located on the upper floors of the Merry Bells. Entrance is from the carpark off Church Road or up the steps from the High Street. Joining the library is completely free. We hope to see you soon!

Opening Hours:

Monday: Closed

Tuesday: 2 to 7pm

Wednesday: 9.30am to 1pm & 2 to 5pm

Thursday: 2 to 5pm

Friday: 9.30am to 1pm & 2 to 6pm

Saturday: 9.30am to 1pm

Sunday :Closed

For news and updates, follow the 'Friends of Wheatley Library' Facebook page or visit wheatleylibrary.org.

For library queries, phone us on 01865 815204, or email wheatley.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk.

Access our library website directly at bit.ly/WheatleyLibrary.

Lauren Thomas | Library Manager



The Merry Bells Village Hall

A Fast Start to 2026

In previous years, the first two months of the year are traditionally quiet, and we the Trustees have used this period to recover from Christmas and a hectic end to the year. But not this year, when 2026 has started with such a 'bang'!

We have had to cope with increased bookings to hire both the Main Hall and Coffee Room plus our recently refurbished kitchen has proved worth the investment in supporting many of the activities now taking place.

As we wrote many times last year of the major investments planned in 2025, they have all now been completed on time and under budget, which is due to the hard work and diligence of our Trustees and, for those now 'bowing-out', we say on behalf of everyone in the village 'thank you'. We remain grateful for your help in developing one of the best village halls in Oxfordshire and if not, certainly the best in South Oxfordshire.

We know you've asked not to be named but we do appreciate all of the dedication and commitment you have shown and delivered these past years. It is a legacy to be proud of.

So knowing that some of our Trustees would be stepping down, we have now successfully recruited five new Trustees, some representing different village organisations, which has always been the case and we have now managed to cover all of the responsibilities that make the Merry Bells tick, as we go into the new year. Some of the responsibilities still need a bit of tweaking and updating, such as our

booking system. With this system, we are looking to make it easier to navigate and confirm your bookings and also once you have a confirmed booking we will issue you with a digital pass enabling you to gain entry for your event.

Here, we also want to say a huge 'thank you' to Wheatley Estates for all of their support over the years in helping issue electronic keys and collecting payments for us. We still need their support but again by the next issue of the Newsletter, we hope the new system will be up and running.

Finally, we return to the topic of parking in the Merry Bells car park and are delighted to say that, as far as we know, all of our car park users who were wrongly issued with fines have received their refunds or have had their fines cancelled. If you are someone who has paid a fine incorrectly issued but have not received a refund, please let us know straight away.

We are pleased to say that the system is now working as it should and the time-limit currently remains at two hours.

However, as we write, we are pleased to confirm that our negotiations to increase the limit to three hours are now almost complete, with just the contracts to be signed by both parties.

But in the meantime, please stick to the two-hour limit until you see the new signs showing the three-hour limit are in place.

On behalf of the Merry Bells, may we the Trustees wish you all a Happy and successful 2026.

The Merry Bells Trustees



Wheatley Playing Field Trust

Last year, Wheatley Parish Council commissioned a building survey of both pavilions on the Wheatley Playing Field, Holton. The last time this was carried out was in 2016 and both buildings have shown some deterioration in that time.

The upper pavilion, to which the Clubhouse is attached, was built in 1973 and the lower pavilion was opened in 1982. The extra changing rooms were needed by increasing numbers of users, including Wheatley Park School which had amalgamated the upper and lower schools onto its current campus in Holton.

Planning permission for the top pavilion was granted in 1973 with the proviso that the pavilion must be an agricultural building to reflect the previous use of the fields. As a consequence, both buildings were constructed with a timber frame with a lifespan of 25 years. All the main services in both buildings date from the time of construction and issues are now occurring due to the length of time they have been operating. The lower pavilion gas boiler has broken down twice this winter. Hot water is obtained from a 150-gallon tank in the loft. All this water has to be heated to supply a few washbasins. If heating is needed (this system was updated a couple of years ago) then, because they are not separate systems, the water in the tank is heated as well. Both tanks have leaks and the framework which carries them has had to be braced because of water damage.

Following the building survey, Wheatley Playing Field Trust has commissioned a structural engineer to report on any remedial work needed to extend the life of the pavilions. This could include revision to the heating and plumbing systems, repair of one of the wooden frame stanchions and replacement of the roof, currently concrete asbestos sheets, to modern insulated sheeting. The Trust is working closely with the Wheatley Parish Council with regard to this work and further investigations will take place over the Easter holiday.

Also, if you are thinking about playing netball, football or rugby or just want to improve your fitness, please contact the clubs directly or use the Trust contact details below.

Do get in touch at:

enquiries@wheatleyplayingfieldtrust.co.uk

www.wheatleyplayingfieldtrust.co.uk

Paul Willmott | Chairman

Wheatley Singers

Ahoy there!

Were you in St Mary's on November 22nd? Then you'll remember Wheatley Singers and friends' uplifting, moving, exciting, surprising performance of Jenkins' "The Armed Man". Seats were jumped out of, pulses raced, hearts melted.

There's another chance to catch the Singers: on **Sunday April 26th**.

Something different: a "concert" performance of **Gilbert and Sullivan's "HMS Pinafore"**. With memorable tunes and high levels of wit, it's set aboard a C19th RN ship, with - typically - twists and turns, until its (gently) shocking denouement.

With the performance at **4.30pm**, you can head home in time for dinner, wearing a smile, humming those memorable tunes.

As ever, the Singers' performance will support a local charity. So, save the date and come and enjoy marvellous music (and refreshments), knowing that you're supporting a vital, local cause.

Following the November concert, a number of new singers have chosen to join. If you, too, would rather "break the fourth wall" and sing with the choir, you'd be most welcome. Tuesday rehearsals start in the URC on **February 3rd**.

Contact Secretary Matthew Maier for information and encouragement:
matthew.maier@mmaier.co.uk, 07885 059633.

Celia Pagel | Treasurer

The Emma Wilson Memorial Fund

Do you know a local young person who gives their time to volunteer in our community?
Would you like to nominate them for an award?

The Emma Wilson Awards are made to young members of the Wheatley / Littleworth community and Wheatley Park School students, in recognition of their voluntary contribution to school or community life. In the past few years, awards have been given to young people who volunteer by coaching sporting activities, helping at charity events, litter picking and giving time and skill to help with children's musical activities in the village.

The Emma Wilson Young People's Initiative Fund, which is part of the EWMF, contributed to the students of Wheatley Park School's environmental project, particularly their tree planting initiative.

Nominations of young people up to the age of 21 are always welcome. If you would like to nominate a young person for an award, or would like to find out more information, then please contact the trustees either by using the google form tinyurl.com/EWMFform or by email at emmawilsontrust@gmail.com

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- Preparing & cooking hot meals
- Anything not listed, please do not hesitate to contact us, details below:

Linda McMahon on 07715 600524 or email lindalizzymac@outlook.com

Moira McMahon on 07715 609968 or email moiramaccr@outlook.com

What's On this Feb/Mar



Waterperry
Gardens

THERE ARE FEW BETTER PLACES TO CELEBRATE THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING THAN WATERPERRY GARDENS IN OXFORDSHIRE.

The historic ornamental gardens provide the perfect setting for the Galanthus. These wonderful little heralds of spring carpet the old orchard and riverside walks at this time of the year, and winter aconites are also likely to bring a smile to visitors' faces, providing new hints of colour in the garden*.

Feb

5TH – WORKSHOP: PRUNING FRUIT

6TH – COURSE: PRUNING FRUIT BUSHES

13TH – COURSE: PRUNING FRUIT FRIDAY

(21ST FEB - 26TH APR) – GREEN WORKS, SPRING EXHIBITION

Mar

6TH – COURSE: ROSE PRUNING

7TH – COURSE: VEGETABLES EVERY DAY

14TH – WORKSHOP: WILLOW GARDEN STRUCTURES

15TH – MOTHER'S DAY

(28TH MAR - 19TH APR) – BIG EASTER BUNNY HUNT



*Normal garden entrance fee applies.

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3-5 yr olds

Working parent 2 year old funding

available

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Breakfast Club

Monday -Friday 8-9am

After school Club

Monday - Thursday 3.00-5.30pm



Register Now for September 2025

**Nursery Hours 7:30am-5:30pm for 9 months-4-
year-olds**



Our curriculum is planned carefully to provide a wide range of exciting play opportunities and to develop basic skills and the knowledge necessary for a smooth transition to school.

15/30 hours Government Funded spaces available.

Nature Club is running for children between the ages 9 months-11 years.

All Stars Club Hours 7:30-9.00am and Monday-Friday 3.00-5.30pm

The aim of the club is to provide a wide and varied programme of After School entertainment for children, extracurricular activities as well as offering childcare. Every day we aim to provide a choice of activities in an attempt to cater for the differing wants and needs of children at the Nursery and neighbouring primary School.

**Please contact us on 01865 876750 or email us at
staff@horspathnursery.org.uk**

Visit our website for more information www.horspathnursery.org.uk

Ofsted April 2022 Rating: Good

"Practitioners focus successfully on seeking the views of individual children to plan ongoing activities. Practitioners support children's play and have a consistent approach and use good quality teaching strategies to extend children's learning."

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We are education providers for children from the age of 2 to 5 and are proud to be part of the Wheatley Primary School family, working closely together to build firm foundations for future learning for all children along with access to the vast playing field and forest space on site.

Nursery is open 8.50am—3pm

We now offer wraparound care from 7.30am—5.30pm Monday to Friday

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Notices | Clubs | Events

Bartholomew Consort 'Sacred Symmetry Masses for Double Choir'

St Mary's Church
Sun 1st March

4.00pm

Tickets £15 (students
£10, Under-12s free)

Cash or card at door

Joint Archives History of Holton Exhibition

Holton Village Hall

Sat 14th March

12.30pm-4.30pm

FREE ENTRY

Tea & Cake sale



Holton and Wheatley Cricket Club

welcomes new players
for 2026!

We play Sunday
friendlies through the
season, with pre-season
nets.

Contact Hugh:
07788 672864

Wheatley Refugee
Support Group

Talk by Ann Gibson, Oxford Group Freedom from Torture

Merry Bells
Thu 12th February
7.30pm

[wheatleyrefugeegroup
@gmail.com](mailto:wheatleyrefugeegroup@gmail.com)

Community Larder

Thursdays
14:30 -15:30

St Mary's Church
Help reduce food
waste and support
local causes

Wheatley Scouts Easter Egg

Bingo

Merry Bells

Fri 13th March

6.30pm for 7.00pm start

Entry £3

Refreshments available

Wheatley Gardening Club "Growing Alpines"

*A talk by Katharine
Woods 'The Tea Break
Gardener'*

**Merry Bells
Tue 10th March
7.30pm**

£2 entry for non-members
[wheatleygardeningclub
@gmail.com](mailto:wheatleygardeningclub@gmail.com)

Wheatley Gardening Club

Plant and Seed Swap Evening

Merry Bells
**Tue 14th April
7.30pm**

£2 entry for non-members
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@gmail.com](mailto:wheatleygardeningclub@gmail.com)

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Holton

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have one

Royal British Legion Branch Meeting

New Club 11.30am

Thu 19th February
Sat 21st March

If you wish to stay for
lunch, please contact
Laurence Ray on
laurenceray950@gmail.com



**Sustainable
Wheatley**

SWAPSHOP

Merry Bells

Sat April 25th

Bring stuff

09:00-10:15

Take stuff

10:30-12:00

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Merry Bells

17th February 7.15pm

wheatleywi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk



Wheatley WI

Annual General Meeting & Quiz

Merry Bells

17th March 7.15pm

wheatleywi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

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URC Hall 2.00-4.00pm

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albarjoiner@btinternet.com

Frances Simpson
01865 873248

St Mary's Ladies Guild

2:15pm URC Hall
Fourth Tuesday in month

Hear speakers touching
on many subjects and
charities
Open to all

Mary John 872909

Day by Day

MONDAY

Wheatley Oaks FC | Holton Playing Fields | 19:00-20:00 | Women 30+ | enquiries.wofc@gmail.com

Mindfulness Sitting Group | URC | 08:50-09:40 | 01865 876288 | jmarkgwilliams@gmail.com

Not So Young Club | URC Hall | Fortnightly exc. B/H | 14:00-16:00 | albarjoiner@btinternet.com

Friends of Wheatley Library Fibre Group | 1st & 3rd in month | 14:00-16:00

Beaver Scouts | Scout Hut Holloway Rd. | Term time 18:00-19:00 | 07962 243216

Messy Monday | Maple Tree Centre | 10:00-11:30 | info@mapletree.org.uk

Twins Club | Maple Tree Centre | 14:00-16:00 | info@mapletree.org.uk

Badminton Club | Park Sports Centre | 20:00-22:00 | 07769 827335

Zumba | Wheatley Primary | 19:00-20:00 | Maz: 07773 651154 | mmccann36b@hotmail.com

Move Together Seated Exercise | Merry Bells | 14:00-15:00 | info@flowfitness.org.uk

SOMA Yoga | Merry Bells | 18:00-19:00 | megankentx@gmail.com

TUESDAY

Wheatley Library | Open 14:00-19:00

Rugby Club Seniors Training | Wheatley Playing Field | 19:00 | To book 07768 300314

Wheatley Women's Institute | Merry Bells | 3rd in month | 19:15 | wheatleywi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

Wheatley Singers | URC Hall | 19:15-21:00 | 07769 037110 | All welcome

Wheatley Gardening Club | Merry Bells | 2nd in month | 19:30

Flow Fitness Pilates | Merry Bells | 10:00-11:00 | info@flowfitness.org.uk

Smart Start | Maple Tree Centre | 09:30-11:30 | info@mapletree.org.uk

Merry Bells Coffee Room | 10:00-12:00 | 01865 873996 | All welcome

St Mary's Ladies Guild | URC Hall | 4th in month | 14:15 | 01865 872909 | All welcome



WHEATLEY CARE SCHEME



TRANSPORT TO MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

For residents of Wheatley, Littleworth & Holton



07505 543 750

Mon- Fri 9am-5pm

Can you help us?

Drivers wanted, petrol cost reimbursed.
Additional Coordinator - to manage bookings.
Secretary role - to minute 4 meetings a year.

WEDNESDAY

Parish Surgery | Parish Office, High Street | 09:30-11:30

Maple Babies | Maple Tree Centre | 09:30-12:00 | info@mapletree.org.uk

Wheatley Library | Open 09:30-13:00 & 14:00-17:00

Vinyasa Yoga | Merry Bells | 09:30-10:30 | sparkyoga1111@gmail.com | 07769 584255

Pop-up Pilates | Merry Bells | 18:00 & 19:00 | info@pop-up-pilates.com | 07731 321991

Cub Scouts | Scout Hut Holloway Rd. | 18:45-20:15 | 01865 874284 | Boys & Girls Age 8-10½

Guides & Rangers | St Mary's | Term time 19:00-20:30 | Age 10+ | wheatley.guides@yahoo.co.uk

Brownies | St Mary's | Term time 17:30-19:00 | Age 7-9 | 1stwheatleybrownies@gmail.com

Rainbows | St Mary's | Term time 16:30-17:30 | Age 4-7 | wheatleyrainbows@gmail.com

Merry Bells Coffee Room | 10:00-12:00 | 01865 873996 | All welcome

Baby Music Group | URC | Via Zoom | 10:00 | Term time only | Rachel 07505 131124

Football Fitness | Tiger's Retreat, Garsington | 19:00-20:00 | yohannadam@yahoo.co.uk | Age 30+

Midday Holy Communion | St Mary's Church | 12:00 | vicar@stmaryswheatley.org

THURSDAY

Mindfulness Sitting Group | URC | 08:50-09:40 | 01865 876288 | jmarkgwilliams@gmail.com

Wheatley Walks | Bus Shelter, Top of Holloway | 10:00-11:00 | 01865 873430

Seated Pilates | Merry Bells | 11:30-12:30 | info@pop-up-pilates.com | 07731 321991

Prayers for the World | URC | 10:00-10:30 | 1st in month

Morning Tea or Coffee | URC | 10:30-12:00 | 1st & 3rd in month | Bring a friend

Memory Cafe | URC Hall | 10:00-12:30 | 2nd in month | laurencelalanne99@gmail.com

Wheatley Library | Open 14:00-17:00

Community Larder & Café | St Mary's Church | 14:30-15:30

Time to Rhyme | Maple Tree Centre | 09:30-11:30 | info@mapletree.org.uk

Mum's Cafe | Maple Tree Centre | 14:00-15:00 | info@mapletree.org.uk

Maple Tree at Forest Hill | Forest Hill Village Hall | 10:30-12:00 | info@mapletree.org.uk

Wheatley Village Archive | Wheatley Library | 14:00-16:30 | 01865 425909

Rugby Club Seniors | Wheatley Playing Field | 19:00 | To book 07768 300314

Explorer Scouts | Scout Hut Holloway Rd. | 19:00-21:00 | 07745 285938 | Age 14½-18

Day by Day

FRIDAY

Wheatley Library | Open 09:30-13:00 & 14:00-18:00

Table Tennis | URC Hall | 10:00 | All abilities catered for | val_farmer40@hotmail.com

Little Learners | Maple Tree Centre | 10:00-11:30 | info@mapletree.org.uk

Scouts | Scout Hut Holloway Rd. | 19:00-21:00 | 07745 285938 | Boys & girls age 10½-14

St. Mary's Bell Tower Practice | St. Mary's Church | 19:30-21:00 | 01865 872250

Merry Bells Coffee Room | 10:00-12:00 | 01865 873996 | All welcome

Martial Arts | Primary School Hall | 07731 512682 | Ages 3-7+ | mrsfox@mattfiddes.com

SATURDAY

Parish Surgery | Parish Office, High Street | 09:30-11:30

Wheatley Library | Open 09:30-13:00

Family Fun | Maple Tree Centre | 3rd in month | 10:00-11:30 | info@mapletree.org.uk

Scrabble Club | Location varies | 1st in month | 19:30 | 01865 872628

Our Lady of Lourdes RC Church | 01865 762433 | corpuschristi.oxford@rcaob.org.uk

- Vigil Mass | Our Lady of Lourdes, Crown Rd. | 18:00

SUNDAY

Wheatley Minis Football | Holton Rugby Club | 09:00-10:00 | Ages 4-7 | 07756 608744

St Mary's Church | 01865 872224 | wardens@stmaryswheatley.org

- Holy Communion | 08:00
- Parish Eucharist | 10:00
- Parish Praise Service | 1st Sunday in month | 10:00
- Family Choral Evensong | 17:30

United Reformed Church | 01865 873859 | secretary@wheatleyurc.org.uk

- Morning Worship | 10:00-11:00 followed by coffee | Communion 1st Sun of month
- Pulse Wheatley Youth Group | Every week term time | 18:00-20:00
- Afternoon Tea | 1st in Month | 14:30-16:00

Wheatley Community Church | office@wheatleycommunitychurch.org

- Wheatley Primary School | 10:30



THE WHEATLEY SOCIETY

Last year, the Society lodged its objections to the proposed development on the Waterstock Golf Course land, and the Chairman contributed to the public enquiry. The good news is that the Inspector rejected the appeal, and the land, used by many Wheatley golfers, is likely to continue as at present.

Our latest Desert Island Discs, held on November 13th, saw Roger Simmonds, interviewed by Malcolm Benson, giving us his music selections. It was a very varied choice reflecting Roger's wide experience and musical tastes, ably supported by some stunning video clips, and much appreciated by a very full audience. Thank you Roger.

Our next meeting is on Wednesday, February 18th, at 7.30pm in the Merry Bells by a talk by Jim Woods, Chairman of the Shotover Preservation Trust. His talk is entitled 'The Past, Present and Future of Shotover'.

To complete our year, our AGM will be on Thursday, 19th March, at 7pm in the Merry Bells, followed by a speaker. Joining/rejoining costs are £5 for the year. The programme card will show the meetings for 2026-27.

We look forward to seeing you. All events are open to non-members unless otherwise stated (cost £2). Also, if you would like to join the society, please contact Nigel Banks, Secretary, sec.wheatleysociety@gmail.com.

David Mancey | Chair | sec.wheatleysociety@gmail.com

Daffodil Day at Shotover House

Daffodil Day returns to Shotover House on 22nd March 2026, 2.00pm-4.30pm, offering a much-anticipated celebration of spring and a rare chance for residents of Wheatley and the surrounding area to enjoy these beautiful private gardens. Visitors will be welcomed into a stunning landscape filled with extensive displays of daffodils and a rich variety of other spring bulbs, all providing a spectacular burst of colour at this most uplifting time of year.

Run by St Nicolas Church, Forest Hill, the event combines natural beauty with community spirit. Proceeds are shared equally between the church and The Maple Tree Children's Centre, ensuring that every visit helps support valuable local work. Daffodil Day is a wonderful opportunity to enjoy the countryside, welcome the arrival of spring, and contribute to causes close to home.

Julia Stutfield | www.stnicolasforesthill.org



**Sustainable
Wheatley**

75th Swap Shop

Sustainable Wheatley held their 75th Swap Shop on Saturday 24th January 2026, and they have now been running for 20 years.

In early 2006 a small group of Wheatley residents came together in an informal Community Action Group and decided to hold a recycling event in the Merry Bells in Wheatley.

It was billed as a “Bring and Take” event and the basic idea was that instead of sending unwanted items to landfill, we encouraged Wheatley residents to bring them along so that others could find a use for them. A few people came to the event and were generally bemused – they could not believe that you could just take stuff for free – but the reception was mostly positive and so the group decided to pursue the idea.

Following this initial event, contact was made with Oxfordshire CAG group, the Wheatley group was formally set up and we were then able to receive grants to support us.

Subsequent events were billed as “Swap Shops”, with another two held in 2006 and then five in 2007. By now the idea was catching on and we were recording attendance and the weight of usable items taken away. People in the village overcame their initial scepticism and attendance grew to around 200. In September 2007 we attracted 393 customers; we were not prepared for this, and the Merry Bells became overcrowded. Following this we introduced an entry system to limit the number in the hall at any one time.

Over time the swap shops settled into a pattern, with four per year held in the Merry Bells, and with tea and coffee on sale for the customers. They have become a regular part of village life and are eagerly anticipated. They also attract people from the surrounding area with some attendees prepared to queue for over an hour before entry. The 50th Swap Shop was celebrated in October 2017. Typical attendance now is about 150 with many others dropping items off beforehand; about 650 kg of items are taken by individuals at each event. The items left over at the end are donated to charities, readvertised on a village Freebies group or taken for recycling. Donations from attendees are usually generous enough to cover the costs of the events and a loyal group of volunteers keeps things running smoothly.

Covid caused a temporary halt to the events, and when we resumed in April 2022, a few changes were made to limit close contact between people – we introduced a ‘one-way’ system in the hall, with tighter control on numbers in the room, and we stopped doing refreshments. We also separated the ‘receiving’ and ‘taking’ processes, so that items were not brought in when the hall was full of people.

The main running costs are the hire of the hall at the Merry Bells, and the hire of a van to dispose of the leftovers. Funding was initially from the Oxfordshire CAG group with a

grant of £250 per year, with the balance being donated by the public. The Swap Shops are now largely self funded, but we receive a grant from Oxfordshire CAG to cover most of our insurance costs of the swap shops and the group's other activities.

In the 20 years we have been running these Swap Shops over 46 tonnes of items have been re-used within our community. Thank you to all of our customers, all of our helpers, and to CAG Oxfordshire for their help over the years.

Please get in touch at:

sustainablewheatley.org

sustainablewheatley@gmail.com

Facebook: [@sustainablewheatley](https://www.facebook.com/@sustainablewheatley)

Tim Blightman | Paul Bailey | Jane Charman

Wheatley Morris Dancing Side

A few months ago, a request was put out asking for people help resurrect the Wheatley Morris side which had folded around 2000.

Half a dozen souls attended a first meeting and there have been three practices since. As a member of the side from 1978 to 2000 I agreed to take on the teaching of the dances and the organisation of the side. Unfortunately, age has caught up with me, and I am no longer able to dance in the side. Though I can demonstrate and tell them when they are wrong!!

For a side to dance out properly 6 dancers and a musician are needed, plus a few substitutes. At the moment we do not have that number so this a shout out for more dancers, **male or female**.

If you feel like you would like to have a go at Morris Dancing, then come along to the Merry Bells on 18th February at 8.15pm.

It is a good way of getting/keeping fit and you would be keeping going a tradition of the village, which was not only a feature of the village for 25 years in the latter part of the 20th Century, but also a feature of the late 19th Century as well. Wheatley is one of a few villages that has its own tradition. Having made such an encouraging start, we now need an extra boost. I am sure that the people of Wheatley will meet the challenge.

I hope to see you on 18th February 2026.

Gareth Morris | Sometime Squire and Bagman Morris Men 1978-2000
07713 484090 | garethmorris76@hotmail.co.uk

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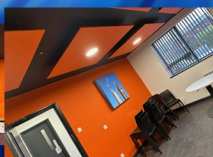
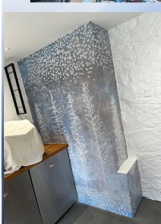
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Wheatley Rugby Club..... Come And Join Us!
And Come And Watch The Six Nations!

Wheatley is a sociable club offering rugby for experienced players and those new to the game so why not come and join us!

We hold senior training on Tuesday evenings at Holton Sports Field, opposite Wheatley Park School, starting at 7 pm. Everyone over the age of 17 is welcome.

And the **Six Nations** is almost here! The club will be open for every England game, and everyone is welcome to come and watch. Game times are:

- **Saturday 7 February:** England v Wales, 16:40
- **Saturday 14 February:** Scotland v England, 16:40
- **Saturday 21 February:** England v Ireland, 14:10
- **Saturday 7 March:** Italy v England, 16:40
- **Saturday 14 March:** France v England, 20:10

If you would like to find out more, please contact me on 07768 300314.

Peter Ramsdale | Chairman, Wheatley RFC



Christmas craft was the theme for our November meeting. We all had great fun making Christmas wreaths from old, recycled Christmas cards. Considering all the laughter going on the results were surprisingly good and I'm sure the wreaths will be proudly displayed in our homes over the holiday period.

December was our Christmas monthly meeting, always a week earlier. We had the pleasure of being entertained by the band 'Old Gold'. They started with old classics from Elvis Presley and The Beatles to name a couple, we then finished with festive Christmas songs. Members were encouraged to join in with both singing and dancing. In the break we all enjoyed a mince pie washed down with a drink. It was a fun filled evening topped off with a Secret Santa.

HISTORY SNIPPETS Feb/Mar 1926

It was decided that Wheatley would take part in a pageant in July in which all institutes in Oxfordshire were being invited to participate. Two classes on glove making were arranged and it was also decided to have a class on making cane sided trays following an interesting talk on this subject.

Mrs Margaret Robert Watts MBE, one of the founder members of the W.I. in England, came to Wheatley in February and gave a talk on "The Home & the Institute". Mrs Goodman, first Chairman of Sussex W.I., also spoke on "Girls and W.I. Life in Canada". To bring the meeting to a close one member played the violin and two other members sang 2 two songs in costume. As Mrs Watts was such an important person in the movement it had been decided to invite six other institutes to the meeting.

Our next meetings are:

17th February

"Show the Love" bring and share.

Bring along homemade food items inspired by love

17th March

Annual General Meeting & Quiz.

Visitors are welcome at most of our meetings. A donation of £5 is suggested to include refreshments and a raffle ticket. We meet at 7.15pm in the Merry Bells.

Stephanie Brooklyn

wheatleywi@oxfordshirewi.co.uk

A Wildlife Garden's Unofficial Report on Humans

Fox's Statement

Look, said Mrs Fox, I've been studying humans for years. Purely for academic reasons, of course, and absolutely not because they leave bins full of delicious research materials. Humans are fascinating creatures. They wander into the garden wearing "outdoor clothes," which appear identical to their indoor clothes except muddier and accompanied by loud sighing.

They plant things, and just expect them to grow, then talk to the things, they fuss over things, then get upset when the things don't grow. They call this "gardening." I call it "free entertainment." Sometimes they even leave out snacks for birds, which I generously help clean up. They should thank me, really. I'm practically a public servant.

Woodlouse's Statement

Humans? Oh yes said Grandma Louse, the stompie giants. I mostly see their boots. Big boots. Heavy boots. Boots that have no respect for a quiet afternoon under a flowerpot.

From my vantage point, approximately 1.3 centimetres above soil level, humans are unpredictable. One moment they're gently lifting a log to "check for wildlife," and the next they're shrieking because they've found... wildlife. Honestly, I don't know what they expected. I'm not here for drama. I'm here to decompose leaves and mind my business.

They also seem obsessed with "tidying." Why? The garden is perfect as it is: messy, damp, and full of rotting wood. Humans keep removing the best bits. If they could stop cleaning up my house, that would be ideal.

Sparrow's Statement

I observe humans from the bird feeder said Brother Sparrow, which they refill with the enthusiasm of a medieval banquet host. They scatter seeds like confetti at a wedding. I approve, and so do my friends.

However, humans do have a strange habit of pointing at me and whispering things like, "Look! A sparrow!" as if I'm not fully aware of being a sparrow already. They also attempt to photograph me, but their timing is terrible. I'm either mid-chew, mid-blink, or mid-poop, or undertaking them all at the same time. They never get my good side.

Still, I appreciate their efforts. Without humans, I'd have to forage naturally, and frankly, I've grown accustomed to the buffet lifestyle.

Joint Conclusion

After extensive observation, we, the fox, the woodlouse, and the sparrow, agree on the following:

- Humans are loud but mostly harmless.
- They enjoy rearranging nature for fun.
- They provide snacks, intentionally or otherwise.
- They panic easily when something with more than four legs appears.
- They are, in summary, peculiar but useful creatures.

We recommend keeping them around. Just... supervised.

Happy Gardening!

01865 747243

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Stuart Mabbutt

Thanks to Our Fantastic Community!



Wheatley is often said to be the kind of village that cares for its own. And we're so proud to announce that our community certainly came through for the 6th Howe Trust Christmas Hamper Initiative.

This year we delivered Christmas food hampers to 94 families eligible for free school meals - meaning we fed some 400-500 adults and children in total. But we couldn't have done it without all the help we received from our fantastic community.

So, we'd like to extend a huge thank you and recognise the contribution of all our financial donors, our volunteers, and our wonderful festive drivers. You really are all so amazing.

Our Financial Donors

Financial donations were made by a number of local parish councils - with **Wheatley PC**, **Garsington PC**, **Risinghurst and Sandhills PC**, and **Forest Hill PC** being particularly supportive. We also received funding from **The Wheatley Larder**.

The generosity of our individual community donors was particularly wonderful - so our thanks go out to all those who gave; many anonymously. Amounts given ranged from £10 up to over £300. Helping others and caring about people who are less fortunate than ourselves is what Christmas is all about.

Our Suppliers

Every year we buy the turkeys and pigs-in-blankets from meat wholesalers **Aldens of Oxford**, who give us a special discount and deliver to us bright and early on the morning of the 23rd.

We were also grateful for the support of **Lucy Day**, **ASDA Wheatley Community Champion** who helped by supplying 300 bags of vegetables completely free of charge, as well as giving us another 300 'bags for life' to put all the food in. **Sustainable Wheatley** donated 50 bottles of freshly pasteurised local apple juice and **Michelle Qume** supplied handmade Christmas cards.

Our Volunteers

The Howe Trustees go out and buy all the ingredients - including stuffing, gravy, yule logs, tubs of chocolates plus all the various vegetarian, gluten, or dairy free alternatives. But that's the easy bit.

We couldn't do it all without the help of **Jayne Clarke Catering** and her huge fridges and freezers for storing of the 100 bags of frozen peas and 100 cans of squirty cream we need!



We also have a slick team of 'hamper pickers' who prepare all of the bags in the school hall, ready to be delivered. So, our special thanks go to **Gill Standing** the Head of Wheatley Primary School, **Jenny Ramsdale**, **Jayne Clarke**, **Alan Clarke**, **Mat Mycock**, and **Elin Fyffe**. They've given so much of their time and help every year since we started this initiative - thanks all!

Our Volunteer Drivers



And then there are the 20 volunteer driving teams - increasingly dressed up in seasonal attire!

Each team makes deliveries to 5 families on the afternoon of December 23rd, with local routes in the villages as well as more distant ones running right across the county.

Special shout outs to our long-distance drivers, **Mandy Green** whose route involved taking her to the deep south (to Wantage) and **Ali and Marc DeJong** who picked the short straw with a very rural route and drove up north (to Upper Heyford).



This year we were also joined by a volunteer delivery team from the **Triangle Nursing Home**. I think it's safe to say that Santa and his Elf won the prize for best costumes this year!

Feedback from Hamper Recipients

Of course, every year the hampers are gratefully received, and this year our delivery drivers were given thank you cards by several families.

To quote one mum "Thank you again, honestly, this has really helped us out. Really appreciate you taking time to do another delivery, you're amazing! Hope you have a lovely Christmas break xxx"

Get Involved

If you'd like to get involved with next year's initiative on December 23rd then do get in touch - or watch out for the announcements in this village newsletter or on our Facebook page in the autumn.

Maggie Fyffe | Chair, The Howe Trust



Greetings from The Maple Tree!

This term we have had a few tweaks to our schedule!

Mondays: Messy Monday (back by popular demand) at 10:00-11:30am

and Twins' Club at 2:00-4:00pm

Tuesdays: Smart Start at 9:30-11:30am

Wednesdays: Maple Babies at 9:30am-12:00pm

Thursdays: Time to Rhyme at 9:30-11:30am and

The Maple Tree at Forest Hill Village Hall from 10:30am-12:00pm

Fridays: Little Learners at 10:00-11:30am

Saturdays: Family Fun at 10:00-11:30am on February 21st, March 14th, and April 18th

We will be open every morning during the February half-term and most days during the Easter holiday – please check our website or social media for details. We have another Emergency Paediatric First Aid for parents and carers coming up in February too!

Here is an additional date for your diary:

22nd March – our fabulous Daffodil Day 2026 with Forest Hill's St Nicolas Church will start at 2:00pm. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Laura on the email below. We need volunteers for all sorts of roles during the event, from ticket collectors to refreshments servers to parking attendants. Beforehand, we will

need lots of bakers and some people to set up traffic signs. We also need muscles to set up and later to take down gazebos, tables, and chairs. It is a lot of fun in a beautiful setting, and it is satisfying to raise much-needed money for these two worthy charities. Do consider joining us as a volunteer or just come to enjoy the ambiance, the stunning setting, and of course the daffodils!



Wish List:

- A volunteer on Monday for our Twins' Club sessions from 2:00-4:00pm
- A fundraising-loving trustee!
- A finance, number-adoring trustee!

We are here to help, if you need advice or support:

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Laura Spencer | Centre Manager

POPPY APPEAL

Poppy Appeal 2025

The amount raised by the Branch in 2025 was **more than £31,000**. The exact figure will not be confirmed for a few months yet but again the branch will have raised a record amount.

The Branch's thanks must go to the collectors who gave of their time at the Welcome Break Service Station and at ASDA, along with their managements who allowed us to collect there. To the various retail outlets and establishments that allowed us to put collecting tins on their counters. Also, to the people who counted the cash from the buckets and tins, to Wheatley Post Office that took all the notes and cash from those buckets and tins. Apologies to those customers who were behind me as I weighed the packets of cash (176 grams for a bag of £1 coins is seared into my memory. It's amazing the machine knows when someone has slipped a 1€ coin in.). Thanks, also, to the villages of Great Milton, Tiddington and Waterstock who make collections as well.

But of course, the major thanks go to those of you who did dig deep and put money into those buckets and tins.

Our pool of collectors is getting smaller, so we are always open to new volun-

teers. So, if you think you could spare a couple of hours at the collecting tables at Welcome Break and/or ASDA please get in touch. My email/phone no. is at the end of this article.

The Branch is also on the lookout for new members. You do not have to have served in the Armed Services to be a member. I never did but joined in memory of my father who served in the Royal Navy in the Second World War. I am sure there are many out there who have a similar association and might wish to support the past and present men and women who serve their country.

To that end the Branch is going to hold Saturday lunchtime meetings at the New Club, every two months starting on **Saturday 21st March 2026 at 12 noon**. We will still be holding our bimonthly Thursday meetings as usual. The next one being **Thursday 19th February 2026 at 12 noon**.

Please come along and give us a try. If you can let me know if you can attend either or both meetings I would be grateful.

Once again, many thanks.

Please contact me on 07713 484090 or garethmorris76@hotmail.co.uk



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A Morland House Surgery **Facebook page** has been created. This is to keep patients up to date with surgery news and health issues. Please like and follow.

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Medicine waste costs the NHS around £300 million/year. Only order the medicines you need. Once medicine leaves a pharmacy it can no longer be re-used even if unopened.

Winter vaccinations are still available from local pharmacies to protect against serious illnesses like flu and COVID-19. For information, check eligibility and booking visit www.nhs.uk/live-well/seasonal-health/keep-warm-keep-well.

Also contact MHS for chicken pox vaccine for toddlers and RSV vaccine for older adults and pregnant women.

Care Messages: The NHS App is now being used by MHS and other health providers to send you simple, secure messages on your phone about your care e.g. appointments, test results, reminders. Much quicker than waiting for a letter or phone call. See MHS website to find out how to turn on notifications in the NHS App and receive Care Messages.

Scam NHS cold calls - beware of fake calls from "receptionists" or "doctors" asking you to update your GP records or risk being removed from the surgery.

You and Your General Practice – this new NHS guide can be downloaded from the MHS website. It is great resource for all NHS patients, full of useful tips and helpful information.

Visit **Morland House Surgery Website** for a wealth of information and guidance on managing a vast number of health conditions, symptoms, and treatment: www.morland-house.co.uk For example:

- **Medical Records and Test Results** - guidance on how to access this information.
- **Pharmacy First Service (PFS)**, whereby pharmacies can treat directly seven common health conditions.
- **Online Resources for Clinical Help** via self-referrals
- **Group Consultation Clinics** – successful group clinics are currently being offered for the menopause and hypertension.
- **Breast screening** to detect the most common cancer in women
- **Whooping Cough** infections, symptoms and treatment
- **Weight Loss Medication**
- **Childhood Immunisation**



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SOCIAL MEDIA: Instagram (@wheatleynewclub), Facebook (The New Club - Wheatley). In addition, keep an eye out on our website: www.thenewclubwheatley.com.

COMING UP:

Saturday 7th February – Comedy Night raising funds for Thames Valley Air Ambulance.

Saturday 7th March – Race Night

Saturday 14th March – Live music with Rick Chase

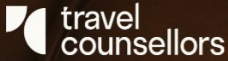
Sunday 5th April – Easter Egg hunt



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Wheatley United Reformed Church

01865 803859 | secretary@wheatleyurc.org.uk

URC News

The URC, both nationally and in Wheatley, has long been active in supporting the needs of our brothers and sisters throughout the world, needs which seem more pressing by the day, as governments worldwide slash their foreign aid budgets and military might seems regularly to trump (no pun intended) ethical values.

Our Care for the World team ran a very successful fundraising evening at the end of October, featuring celebrated harpist Becki Luff, which raised a total of £ 1432 in donations, split equally between Oasis of Peace, an organisation providing practical examples of the way Jewish and Palestinian people can live together in harmony in the Holy Land, and the Falcon School, where our little church has helped sustain and develop a school in a deprived area of a very deprived country, Zimbabwe.

On the first Thursday of each month people meet from 10.00 to 10.30 am in the Mulberry Room for Prayers for the World, a brief time of asking divine assistance to the practical needs of many areas of our suffering planet. We happily welcome those from other denominations or none, who also wish to join us. There is no need to say anything, but the focus of people's prepared prayers often goes way beyond the coincidental.

One of the first dates in my diary is the World Day of Prayer, where Christian women from a country near or far provide an ecumenical service on a pre-determined theme. This year's service is provided by the women of Nigeria and is on the theme 'I will give you rest.' Nigeria has the seventh largest population in the world, the largest GDP in Africa, and over 250 languages. Independent since 1960, with continuing democratic rule since 1999, it has tried with varying degrees of success to bring harmony to the different ethnic groupings forced together by colonial boundaries of the past. In 2024, the Nigerian government re-instituted the country's original national anthem including the lines 'Though tribe and tongue may differ, In brotherhood we stand, Nigerians all and proud to serve Our sovereign Motherland.'

Whatever your denomination or indeed if you merely wish to learn something of how ordinary Nigerians live, think and worship today, you are warmly invited to the World Day of Prayer service at the URC in Crown Square on Friday March 6th at 2pm, followed by refreshments in the church hall. Please note the date in your diaries.

All are welcome!

Mike Matejschuk

Our Lady of Lourdes

01865 762433 | corpuschristi.ox

The Liturgical Cycle 2026

In the Christian Church, the liturgical year starts at Advent each year and, over a three-year cycle, our readings focus in turn upon the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, with the Gospel of John used on special occasions throughout each year. As we leave behind Christmastide and the Epiphany, we return to the Ordinary time of the year; until Advent 2026 we will be primarily focussing at Mass on the Gospel of Matthew. But who was he?

Before following Jesus, Matthew worked not as a fisherman but as a tax collector (Matthew 9:9), a profession despised by many Jews at the time. Chosen as one of the twelve apostles sent out to spread the Gospel, he became part of Jesus' inner circle, and his inclusion highlights Jesus' ability to transform lives.

Matthew records 23 parables, all of which teach important lessons about God's Kingdom, including unique stories like the Parable of the Wheat and Tares and the Parable of the Ten Virgins. One of Matthew's most notable contributions is the Sermon on the Mount

ford@rcaob.org.uk

(Matthew 5–7), where Jesus taught foundational principles of Christian living, a section which includes the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, and teachings on love, forgiveness, and humility.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the Gospel of Matthew was written primarily for a Jewish audience. For example, the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven" is used over 30 times, more than any other Gospel writer, which reflects Jewish reverence for God's name, avoiding the direct use of "Kingdom of God." The Gospel also emphasizes Jesus as the promised Messiah and contains numerous references to Old Testament prophecies, showing how Jesus fulfilled them.

Matthew ends his Gospel with Jesus' Great Commission, commanding disciples to "make disciples of all nations." It is an invitation to all people, then and now, to follow a missionary voyage of learning and discovery. It is a challenge which we will bear in mind at OLL as we contemplate quietly in the Church, open daily, for private prayer, and at our Vigil Mass each Saturday evening at 6pm.

John Guy

St Mary's Church

01865 872224 | vicar@stmaryswheatley.org

Dear Friends

This is the dark time of the year when the sun rises late and is gone before five. Christmas jollity is gone; the trees are binned and all the decorations packed away.

December at St Mary's was a time of celebration. Packed houses heard a host of brilliant concerts week by week, from the Angelorum Choir, the Thame Silver Training Band, and the Round the Piano Community Choir. Then the Village Carol Service, with a congregation of 200-plus squeezed into every nook and cranny of the church, and many standing at the back (Memo to the Wardens: book more chairs next year!); a semi-professional choir, great carols, and familiar readings.

Then came the annual Crib Service with children dressed as angels, shepherds, Joseph, Mary, and the Donkey; Midnight Mass and booming bells, early and late Communion, Evensong and Christmas cheer; Epiphany – the Wise Men and the Mystery of the Star. All gone – and now the dark time of the year, and Spring a long way off.

But the 2nd of February is the Festival of Candlemass, when folk took candles into church, where they were blessed and used for the rest of the year. Candlemass recalls the presentation of baby Jesus at the Temple, 40 days after his birth. It symbolises Christ as the 'Light of the World'. Candlemas is a time for looking forward to the light, a new dawn in this dark and troubled world.

The poet TS Eliot describes this time of year:

Midwinter spring is its own season...

The brief sun flames the ice, on ponds and ditches

In windless cold that is the heart's heat,

Reflecting in the watery mirror

A glare that is blindless in the early afternoon

And glow more intense than blaze of branch, or brazier,

Stirs the dumb spirit: no wind, but Pentecostal fire

In the dark time of the year.

Peter Fanning

Wheatley Community Church

office@wheatleycommunitychurch.org

A Quiet Revival?

In 2015 a bunch of Christians locally came together to start a new church, meeting each Sunday in Wheatley's Merry Bells. What became of them? Why don't they meet there any more? It wasn't that they gave up: their problem was they outgrew the space and had to move to Wheatley Primary School.

It might seem surprising that churches are growing. The familiar narrative is of church decline. Church attendance fell markedly over the past century in UK. But that's not the whole picture. Globally the church is growing fast. Like China, set to be the nation with the largest Christian population by 2030.

But even in the UK something's changed. National surveys show many churches are growing, in all age groups except ages 45-64 (come on guys, you're missing out!). When WCC started only 4% of UK 18-to-24-year-olds attended church at least monthly. By 2025 that's quadrupled to 16%, with particular increases amongst young men.

So, what's going on? Sociologists call this the 'Quiet revival'. Gen Z and Gen Z-A (aged 11-18) are spending more time in isolation, engaging with the world through their screens. Over 60% rank social media as the top place to seek connection. There's a hunger for real connection and for answers to those seeking meaning.

That's what I love about my church. It is a place of real connection. And it's offering some profound answers to questions of meaning. It's a claim made by Jesus' closest friend, the apostle John, who said, 'We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son.' 1 John 1:3. His faith was based on real events he had witnessed for himself, and it brought him real connection with God and with others through his church.

So why not come and check us out? Details below:

Our meetings are relaxed and informal. Visitors are very welcome.

We meet **every Sunday morning** at **10.30am** at the **Primary School** for a time of sung worship, prayer, and a talk from the bible.

Children and young people's groups run from part way through the service most weeks.

We will have all-age **Easter Services** on **29th March**, Palm Sunday and **5th April**, Easter Day

If you have any questions or would like more information please visit

www.wheatleycommunitychurch.org, or email us at

office@wheatleycommunitychurch.org.

Tim Hinks | Pastor

WHEATLEY REFUGEE SUPPORT GROUP

On Thursday 12th February (7.15 for 7.30pm) we will hold a talk in the Merry Bells from Ann Gibson, Chair of Oxford Freedom from Torture group.

Ann will tell us about the origins of the group, where survivors come from and why, how the group supports them (counselling, therapy, legal aid) and campaigning work.

She will talk for 30-40 minutes followed by questions.

Refreshments, donations for Freedom from Torture.

We plan our next collection of good condition clothes, bedding and survival gear on behalf of Global Aid Network (GAIN) plus food for Asylum Welcome Food Bank in April, date to be finalised and given in next newsletter.

The food collection at Asda in December was extremely well supported, generosity much appreciated in these difficult times.

In May (date to be finalised) we will have a talk from the Sanctuary Hosting team of Asylum Welcome. This scheme matches hosts with a spare room with (generally) short term accommodation to those granted refugee status, who have only had 28 days to leave hotel accommodation, with no money or connections. The team will explain how they can facilitate such arrangements and provide support to both hosts and guests.

They also seek donations to fund other emergency accommodation.

www.asylum-welcome.org/winter.

Many Wheatley residents have had particular involvement with Ukrainian families settled here due to the deadly war in their country. If you'd like to increase your understanding of this war and the experiences of its people we can suggest some books.

Further information from wheatleyrefugeegroup@gmail.com.

Nick Vernede



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info@mapletree.org.uk

WALKS PROGRAMME FEBRUARY/MARCH 2026

FEBRUARY

Tuesday 3rd: 5 mile walk along quiet roads and tracks, some not too steep hills. Start place Bradenham NT car park on Smalldean Lane.

Thursday 5th: 6 mile walk through woods and commons and Wormsley Park, starting in Stokenchurch.

Monday 9th: Undulating 5 mile Chilterns walk from Whiteleaf Cross car park, passing Pulpit Hill and Chequers.

Tuesday 10th 10:30am: Gentle, social, linear 2½ mile walk starting from Bury Knowle Park, Headington (option to meet at Courtside café at 10am for coffee). Return to start via short bus ride.

Sunday 15th: 6 mile walk with hills and views from Stokenchurch.

Tuesday 17th: Hilly (990ft ascent) 7 mile walk towards Radnage then via Sprigs Alley, starting at church car park in Crowell.

Friday 20th: Scenic 6 mile walk from Stokenchurch with 800ft of ascent.

Thursday 26th: 6 mile walk up into the Chilterns from Watlington recreation ground car park.

MARCH

Wednesday 4th: Undulating 6½ mile Chilterns walk from Whiteleaf Cross car park, passing Pulpit Hill and Green Hailey. 930ft of ascent.

Saturday 7th: 6½ mainly level miles from Waterperry Gardens. Option for coffee and cakes in the café at the finish.

Tuesday 10th 10:30am: Gentle, social 2 mile walk from Mill View Garden Centre, Wheatley. Optional coffee at 10am.

Thursday 12th: Starting in Nether Winchendon, a 7½ mile walk with good views over open countryside. 1,000ft of ascent.

Thursday 19th: From Bernwood Forest car park, a 6 mile walk via Oakley.

Sunday 22nd: A fairly flat 6 mile walk from Sydenham.

Tuesday 26th: 5½ mile walk from Kingston Blount Village Hall to Chinnor, return via Kiln Lakes Nature Reserve. Optional stop at Cherry Tree PH.

Sunday 29th: Leisurely 5½ mile walk from Great Hampden passing John Hampden monument and Hampden House.

All walks are circular and start at **10am unless otherwise stated.**

Please check the website to confirm walks details as they are subject to change:

www.ramblers-oxon.org.uk/thame-wheatley/walking.html

SODC Waste Collections — February & March 2026

Collection day Monday unless *changed	Which bins and other items?
Feb 2nd & 16th Mar 2nd, 16th & 30th	Green, brown, food, oil, textiles, batteries
Feb 9th & 23rd Mar 9th & 23rd	Grey, food, oil, small electricals

Key Contacts

Local Governance:

Oxfordshire County Council | 01865 792422 | oxfordshire.gov.uk
County Councillor Tim Bearder | 07789 754727 | tim.bearder@oxfordshire.gov.uk
District Councillor Peter Ramsdale | peter.ramsdale@southoxon.gov.uk
South Oxfordshire DC | 01235 422422 | southoxon.gov.uk
Planning Applications | 01235 422600 | planning@southoxon.gov.uk
Wheatley Parish Council | 01865 875615 | clerk@wheatleyparishcouncil.gov.uk

Local information:

Wheatley Post Office | 0845 722 3344 | Open Mon-Fri 09:00-17:30, Sat 09:00-13:00
The Maple Tree (Children's Centre) | 01865 236700 | laura@mapletree.org.uk
The Merry Bells Village Hall | 07427 343080 | merrybells.org.uk
The Howe Trust | Chair | Maggie Fyffe | 07889 639986 | howetrust.org.uk
Wheatley Library | 01865 815204 | wheatley.library@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Wheatley Park Sports Centre | 01865 872128 | better.org.uk/venues/park
Wheatley Park School | 01865 872441 | wheatleypark.org
Wheatley Primary School | 01865 872366 | wheatley.oxon.sch.uk
Wheatley Good Neighbour Scheme | 07907 104856 | wheatleygns@gmail.com

Services:

Police non-emergency | 101 | www.thamesvalley.police.uk
Citizens Advice Oxfordshire | 03444 111 444 | caox.org.uk
To report potholes, fly-tipping, broken paving, vandalism, etc. | fixmystreet.com
OCC Family Information Service | 08452 262636 | fis.enquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk
OCC Highways | 0845 310 1111 | highway.enquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Missed Bin Collection | 03000 610610 | admin.southoxford@biffa.co.uk
Bulky Household Waste Collection | 01235 422406 | waste.team@southandvale.gov.uk
Housing | 01235 422422 | housing@southandvale.gov.uk
GP Surgery, Morland House | 01865 872448 | morland-house.co.uk
NHS Out of Hours Service | 111 | 111.nhs.uk
Gas Emergency | 0800 111 999 | nationalgrid.com/group/safety-and-emergencies
National Power Cut Helpline | 105 | ssen.co.uk
Burst pipe or leak | 0800 714 614 | thameswater.co.uk
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Transport:

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Wheatley Care Scheme (transport to hospital or GP surgery) | 07505 543750
Oxford Bus Co. (400 P&R, NU1, 46) | 01865 785400 | brookesbus.oxfordbus.co.uk
National Rail Enquiries | 03457 484950 | nationalrail.co.uk

May Day 2026

May Morning celebration
Church Road Rec
Free Event!

10am
4th
May

All
Welcome

Illustrated by
Scarlet Thomas

